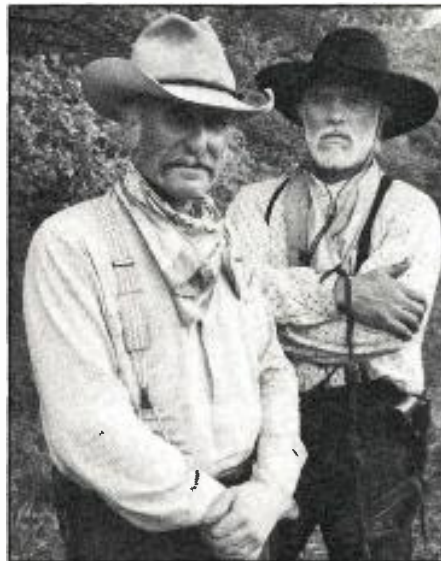




CBS's 'Till We Meet Again'



...and last season's 'Lonesome Dove'

out to eat."

Tony Masucci, senior vice president, mini-series and motion pictures for television at NBC, said: "The standard for mini-series is four to six hours," and he expects that *War and Remembrance* will probably be the last of the longer-form mini-series. Masucci also disputed the traditional notion that mini-series don't perform well in May, especially those with a heavy dramatic theme, the logic being that when the weather improves and children get out of school, viewers tend to engage in more outdoor activities. "If you schedule something viewers want to see, they'll be there," he said, citing a recent two-parter on NBC which aired in late May. The program, *I Know My First Name is Steven*, was about a teenager who is returned to his family seven years after being kidnapped. The four-hour mini-series averaged a 39 share on the Sunday and Monday nights it aired.

Masucci also said he believed that period pieces continue to be viable themes, citing the ratings success of CBS's *Lonesome Dove*. "If the story is compelling enough, it doesn't really matter what the theme is. Besides, it's all really a crap shoot, and you just try to make them as good as possible and hope there's an audience."

ABC has announced three mini-series for next season with a fourth to be announced. Two of the series, Stephen King's novel "IT" and *The Kennedys of Massachusetts*, based on the book "The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys," are six hours long, with *Small Sacrifices*, starring Farrah Fawcett, running four hours. Sabinson said *Small Sacrifices* is a probable candidate to air during the November sweeps, with *IT* and *The Kennedys of Massachusetts* probably airing after January of 1990 in either the February or May sweeps.

"IT," one of King's most popular novels, is the story of seven childhood friends who must return to the town where they grew up 30 years earlier to confront an evil force. *IT* will be directed by George Romero and is a Lorimar production.

*The Kennedys of Massachusetts* covers 55 years in the lives of the Kennedy clan. The cast includes Charles Durning, Annette O'Toole, William Petersen and Tracy Pollan. The mini-series is produced by Edgar

J. Scherick Inc., in association with Commonwealth Productions Inc.

CBS has two five-hour mini-series and a four-hour mini-series set for next season. *Family of Spies: The Walker Spy Ring*, currently in production in Los Angeles and Vienna, is the true story of John Walker Jr., who sells military secrets to the Soviets and eventually lures his best friend and several family members into the operation. The five-hour series is produced by Black Den Productions in association with Phoenix Entertainment Group, and stars Powers Boothe and Lesley Ann Warren.

The other five-hour mini-series is the adaptation of the Judith Krantz novel "Till We Meet Again." Starring Bruce Boxleitner, Courtney Cox, Barry Bostwick and Michael York, the mini-series is about three women and their lives during the first and second World Wars. This will be the fourth Krantz novel to be adapted as a mini-series on CBS, following *Scrupes*, *Mistral's Daughter* and *I'll Take Manhattan*. The mini-series is produced by Steve Krantz Productions in association with Yorkshire Television.

The third, a four-hour mini-series, is called *Common Ground*, about desegregation in Boston and three families that are torn apart during the social upheaval in that city. NBC has announced seven mini-series for next season, but Masucci said the network may reduce that number to six. Of the seven announced series, only one, *Desperados: The Kiki Camarena Story*, is six hours long; the rest are four hours long. The lone six-hour series is based on the true story of a drug enforcement agent whose life and death reveal the greed, corruption and violence of South America's drug cartels and their links to members of the Mexican government. Produced by ZZY Inc. Productions, Michael Mann is executive producer. The cast includes Treat Williams, Steven Bauer, Craig T. Nelson and Elizabeth Pena.

*Blind Faith*, produced by NBC Productions, is based on the best-selling novel by Joe McGinnis about an affluent businessman in New Jersey who arranges to have his wife murdered.

*Cross of Fire*, starring John Heard and Mel Harris, is about a young woman who dies at the hands of a Ku Klux Klan leader. Set in Indiana during the 1920's, the series is produced by Leonard Hill Films.

*The Godfather Wars*, inspired by actual events, is about a young Italian-American who becomes obsessed with apprehending members of a major mafia family, some of whom were childhood rivals. The series is produced by Daniel H. Blatt Productions.

*People Like Us*, based on a novel by Dominick Dunne, is about a journalist obsessed with avenging his daughter's murder. Chuck McLain is executive producer of the ITC Productions project.

*Phantom of the Opera*, written by Arthur Kopit, and based on the novel by Gaston Leroux, is the story of a masked figure who haunts the Paris Opera House and risks his life to win the heart of the woman he loves. *Phantom of the Opera* is produced by Saban/Scherick Productions.

*The Rock Hudson Story* chronicles the actor's life and his death from AIDS. Stan Margulies is executive producer for the PKE Productions mini-series. —SC

## NBC wins, Fox debuts, in May market-by-market sweeps

**Network makes it five in a row; Arbitron includes Fox Broadcasting in network daypart estimates**

The old news in Arbitron's May market-by-market sweeps report was that NBC won again (BROADCASTING, March 6), its fifth sweeps victory and its 16th win in the last 17 tries. The "man bites dog" of that report, however, was that for the first time, audience for Fox Broadcasting programming was included head-to-head with ABC, CBS and NBC in network prime time daypart estimates.

According to Arbitron, it was responding to requests by clients, who "are increasingly buying and evaluating Fox as a network," the company said in an information sheet sent to client stations announcing the

change. Arbitron spokeswoman Nan Myers said the company is "treating Fox as a network" in terms of the prime time daypart. "They [Fox] asked, and although they don't meet FCC definition [of a network], many agencies are buying them as a network," Myers said.

Fox-affiliated "independent" stations are identified as simply "FOX" (rather than IND, as are independents) in the listing of stations on the first page of the report. According to Arbitron, some independent Fox affiliates have requested that they be identified as FOX(IND), and it is considering adopting that dual identification in the July report.

The prime time network daypart tally for May showed NBC first in 129 markets (including 4 ties), down six from May 1988,